

Bible study for this week 7/09/12~7/15/12

***July 09 (Monday), 2012** {[Matthew 5:11~16](#)} Key: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father. ([Matthew 5:16](#)) “**Show Up Before You Speak Up**” Bible In One: [Job 38-40 & Acts 16:1~21](#)

There was a time when a certain West Coast city may have been one of the most hostile places to the gospel in America. Posters in coffee shops advertised witchcraft meetings where you could learn to cast a spell on your enemies.

It was such a challenging environment for churches that they struggled to get building permits from the city council. And there was a lot of “woe is me” talk among church leaders. Until a group of pastors began to meet to pray regularly and then decided to take the love of Jesus into their city. They started a ministry to the homeless, to those suffering with AIDS, to teens at risk. Faithfully and intentionally they brought the love of Jesus to the needs of hurting people. Before long, the city agencies started calling on them for help. Better yet, the churches started growing as people responded to the gospel in action.

Which proves the point: Sometimes you’ve got to “show up” before you speak up. No one really wants to hear what we have to say about the love of Jesus until they’ve seen it in our lives ([Matt. 5:16](#)). Then even the most ardent opponents to the gospel may just be glad you’re in their town, their office, or their neighborhood. And then you just might be able to tell them about Jesus.

Meditate: Let us go forth, as called of God, Redeemed by Jesus’ precious blood; His love to show, His life to live, His message speak, His mercy give.

Aphorism: When you share the gospel, make sure you live the gospel.

***July 10 (Tuesday), 2012** {[2 Cor. 11:22~33](#)} Key: . . . besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ([2 Corinthians 11:28](#)) “**The Price Of Involvement**” Bible In One Year: [Job 41-42 & Acts 16:22~40](#)

While making his landmark documentary about World War II, filmmaker Ken Burns and his colleagues watched thousands of hours of military footage. Scenes of the devastating Battle of Peleliu often invaded their dreams at night. Burns told *Sacramento Bee* reporter Rick Kushman, “You’re listening to the ghosts and echoes from an almost inexpressible past. If you do that, you put yourself into the emotional maelstrom.”

There’s a price to becoming involved in the struggles of others, whether artistically or spiritually. Paul experienced this in his work of sharing the gospel: “Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?” ([2 Cor. 11:28~29 NASB](#)).

Oswald Chambers said we enter this spiritual struggle as we “deliberately identify ourselves with God’s interests in other people” and “find to our amazement that we have power to keep wonderfully poised in the center of it all.”

Paul realized that God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness ([2 Cor. 12:9](#)). Jesus paid the greatest price to be involved in our world, and He strengthens us as we share His love with others.

Meditate: Though weak, you still can serve today And follow Christ’s command;
Behind the lines or in the fray In Jesus’ strength you stand.

Aphorism: If we obey God’s calling, He will provide the needed strength.

***July 11 (Wednesday), 2012** {[James 1:19~27](#)} Key: Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only. ([James 1:22](#)) “**The Doers Of The World**” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 1-3 & Acts](#)

[17:1~15](#)

A friend recalls: Just after we moved to a house in a new neighborhood, we invited my sister-in-law and her husband over for Sunday dinner. As we were greeting Sue and Ted at the door, an odd noise directed their eyes toward the kitchen. As I followed their gaze, I froze in horror. An errant hose of our old portable dishwasher was whipping about like the trunk of an angry elephant, spewing water everywhere!

Sue went into action mode. Dropping her purse, she was in the kitchen before me, shutting off the water and calling for towels and a mop. We spent the first 15 minutes of their visit on our knees mopping the floor.

Sue is a doer—and the world is a better place because of the doers of the world. These are the people who are always ready to pitch in, to be involved, and even to lead if necessary.

Many of the doers of the world are also doers of the Word. These are the followers of Jesus who have taken the challenge of James to heart: “Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only” (1:22).

Are you doing all that you know God wants you to do? As you read God’s Word, put what you’ve learned into practice. First hear—then do. God’s blessing comes as a result of our obedience (v.25).

Meditate: We need to hear the Word of God To know what we should do, But listening is not enough Without our follow-through.

Aphorism: The value of the Bible does not consist merely in knowing it, but in obeying it. ***July 12 (Thursday), 2012** { [Acts 17:22~31](#) } Key: You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. ([1 Thessalonians 1:9](#)) “A Spiritual Journey” Bible In One Year: [Psalms 4–6 & Acts 17:16~34](#)

The miracles that God worked through Moses challenged the many gods of Pharaoh. Yet, in another time, there was a Pharaoh who promoted the belief in one deity. Pharaoh Akhenaten pointed to the rising and setting sun as the great deity who gave life to the earth. His religious symbol for Aton, the sun god, was represented by a single disc of light with emanating rays. Though this Pharaoh’s idea came closer to the one God of the Bible, it was still idolatry.

When Paul addressed the people in Athens, he was grieved by the idolatry in that city. Yet he used the people’s imperfect understanding of God to point them to the God of Scripture. Of their efforts in trying to find God, Paul said: “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” ([Acts 17:24](#)).

In our increasingly pluralistic world, the people around us may worship a multiplicity of deities. Yet their spiritual journey need not end there. We never know when someone might be moving toward the kingdom of God. Following the example of Paul, we should respect a person’s religious background, watch for spiritual receptivity, and then point him or her to the one true God of Scripture.

Meditate: A Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to lead the lost away from all that is false. And to lead them to You—the one and only God— who alone offers true life. In Jesus name Amen.

Aphorism: God alone is worthy of our worship. ***July 13 (Friday), 2012** { [Deuteronomy 15:7~11](#) } Key: If there is among you a poor man of your brethren . . . you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand. ([Deuteronomy](#)

[15:7](#)“The Poor Among Us”Bible In One Year:[Psalms 7–9 & Acts 18](#)

Francis Chan, in his book *Crazy Love*, tells of a family with an interesting Christmas tradition. On Christmas morning, the Robynson family doesn't focus on opening presents under the Christmas tree. Instead, they make pancakes and coffee, and serve the breakfast to the homeless. This is a small but creative way to show God's love and generosity to the poor.

God expected this kind of generosity from His people. In Deuteronomy 15, Moses emphasized the reality of poverty and how the more affluent must deal with it. They were warned of four dangers:

A hard heart, ignoring the needs of the poor (v.7). *A closed hand*, withholding what the poor lacked (v.7). *An evil thought*, hesitating or refusing to loan money to the poor because the year of canceling debts was nearing (v.9). *A grudging spirit*, a reluctance to satisfy the needs of the poor among them (v.10). Not only were they warned about selfishness, but more important, they were encouraged to be spontaneously generous (vv.8,10,11).

Among God's people, there must always be a spirit of generosity toward the poor. Let's open our hearts and our hands.

Meditate: One grace each child of God can show is giving from a willing heart; Yet, if we wait till riches grow, It well may be we'll never start.

Aphorism: Generosity stems from the heart that has experienced God's grace.

***July 14 (Saturday), 2012** {[Luke 15:11~24](#)} **Key:** I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. ([Luke 15:19](#))“Deal, Or No Deal”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 10–12 & Acts 19:1~20](#)

If you're like me, you love a good deal. Not just bargain shopping, but when you manage to cut a great deal for yourself without giving anything up in return. So if you can identify with these kinds of deals, you'll understand the prodigal son's scheme when he decided to return home.

There were three kinds of servants in those days: day workers who were paid on a day-to-day basis; hired servants who worked long hours on the estate but lived in town with their independence intact; or bond servants who lived on the estate and gave all of themselves to serving the family.

When the prodigal son hit rock bottom, it's interesting that his planned apology involved asking if he could be like a hired servant. Why not a grateful bond servant? Some commentators suggest that perhaps he was trying to negotiate a deal—a way to get a paycheck and keep his independence as well.

Often we approach God like, “I'll serve You but You can't take away my freedom.” It may seem like a good deal at the time, but God's deal is so much better. Just like the boy's father, His arms are ready and willing to receive repentant sinners as part of His family. There could be no better deal and no better way to serve Him!

Meditate: Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine; Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride; I now surrender, Lord—in me abide.

Aphorism: True freedom is found in surrender to Christ.

***July 15 (Sunday), 2012** {[Psalm 71](#)} **Key:** When I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation. ([Psalm 71:18](#))“A Man My Age”Bible In One Year: [Psalms 13–15 & Acts 19:21~41](#)

On a recent flight, I got ready to do some work. Spread out on my tray were my laptop computer, backup hard drive, iPod, and other gadgets that are part of being a 21st-century “road warrior.” As I worked, a young man seated beside me asked if he could make a comment. He told me how inspirational it was for him, a young man, to see someone my age so enthusiastically embracing modern technology. In spite of his intention to compliment me, I suddenly felt about 120 years old. *What did he mean by “someone my age”?* I wondered. After all, I was “only” 60.

Then I remembered Psalm 71, the psalm for folks “my age” and beyond. It reminds us of the value of a life well lived and of the worth of lessons learned: Lessons are not just for our benefit but also for us to pass along to the next generations. The psalmist wrote, “When I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come” (v.18).

So, maybe being “someone my age” isn’t such a bad gig. It is the privilege of “veteran” Christ-followers to declare the strength and power of God to the younger generations. That’s how we can truly be inspirational to them.

Meditate: The older saints who trust God’s Word Have trod where younger ones now walk; They’ve fought the battles they will fight— Their wisdom teaches truth and right.

Aphorism: The best gift for the younger generation is a good example from the older generation.